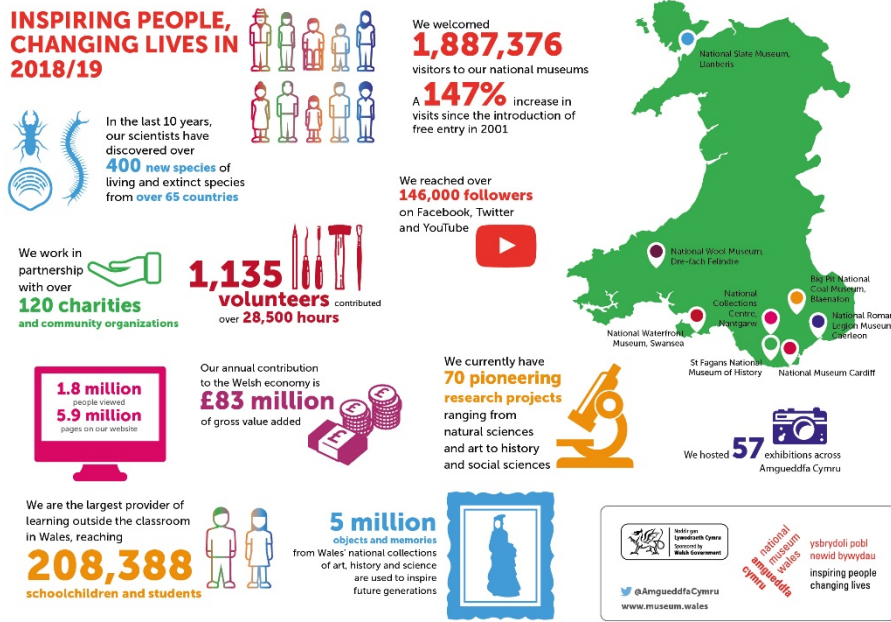


Update for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee November 2019



Our national museums belong to the people of Wales and thanks to the Welsh Government, are all free to visit. They are the home of the Welsh national collections of art, social and industrial history as well as environmental science. Our goal is to remove barriers so that more people are inspired by, share and use our galleries and programmes.

We have developed a distinctively Welsh model of cultural democracy. Through the awarding of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019 to St Fagans, and the huge successful Kizuna exhibition at National Museum Cardiff in 2018, we have demonstrated that Wales' museums are internationally significant and that we make a vital contribution the Welsh Government's international ambitions.

Current Priorities

In Autumn 2020, we will publish a new Ten Year Strategic Plan. Its purpose will be to identify - within the framework of our Vision, *Inspiring People, Changing Lives* - how Amgueddfa Cymru will help deliver the priorities of Welsh Government and the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. We will build on the success of how the Vision was brought to life through the St Fagans model and make it a key part of the Strategic Plan.

Some initial priorities have emerged:

- We are ambitious for all of our nation's national museums. Visitors have high expectations following the awarding of Museum of the Year 2019 to St Fagans. All of our national Museums should have first class public facilities to include a learning centre, conditioned galleries and commercial and public spaces.

- Expand opportunities for cultural participation and critical enquiry, using the national collections of art, natural science, social and industrial history and archaeology in innovative new galleries, exhibitions and events
- Our website and social media channels are our eighth public site. Through enhanced digitisation of the collections, and participative digital activities, we could create a dispersed national creative cultural resource for and about Wales, accessible across the globe.
- Learning – both formal and informal – is one of our primary purposes. As leaders in Wales in cultural learning, we want to expand our services. We will continue to lead on and develop our research and evaluation programs on effective museum practice.
- Leading the way in museums sector in the UK to reach a socially diverse audience, and this represents one of our great strengths. To engage new audiences we will continue to adapt our ways of working to further engage with our visitors and communities and embed people’s rights to cultural participation.
- We can do more to support and deliver interventions for health and wellbeing for people of all ages. Our programmes in this are hugely successful, and there is an opportunity to expand this work and its impact.
- We recently joined a number of cultural organisations who have declared a Climate Emergency therefore acknowledging what is happening to our world, and making a commitment to working with our communities to find solutions.

In the immediate future, our ambitions include:

- Delivering, and helping to shape, the Welsh Government’s ambitions for Contemporary Art in Wales
- Commencing the Redevelopment of the National Slate Museum, developing it as a second headquarters for Amgueddfa Cymru
- Ensuring more of the national collections are on display in different venues across Wales, as well as delivering touring exhibitions to tour Wales and the world
- Securing Investors in People for Amgueddfa Cymru as a whole rather than as individual museums. We are working alongside our staff and Trade Unions on this, and are bringing all staff together for a Development event later this month.

Highlights in 2018-19

Highest Number of Visitors in 112 year history

In 2018-19, we welcomed 1,887,376 visitors to our seven national museums. This was the highest ever number of visitors since the Museum was founded in 1907 and an increase in attendance of 147% since 2001, when the Welsh Government introduced free entry. We also achieved 146,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and 1.8 million people viewed almost 5.9 million pages on our website. Our Visitor Figures are performing well again in 2019-20, with St Fagans achieving a like for like increase of 65% in visitor numbers in July 2019 compared to July 2018.

Completion of Redevelopment of St Fagans National Museum of History

In October 2018 we completed the £30 million redevelopment of St Fagans National Museum of History. The transformation was shaped through an imaginative public programme that involved 720,000 people and reflected our aim to create history with rather than for the people of Wales. Throughout the six-year development the Museum remained open, welcoming three million visitors.

Since the completion of the project St Fagans has won an array of awards, including the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019, which includes a £100,000 prize. The project was made possible thanks to support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Welsh Government, as well as gifts from trusts, foundations and individuals.

Learning for Life

We remain Wales's leading provider of learning outside the classroom, and in 2018/19 208,388 pupils and students and 489,185 informal learners participated in our programmes. We support Pioneer Schools on longer-term projects and also work on school residency programmes with pupils at risk of exclusion. We also have a vibrant digital learning programme, with a total annual reach of 192,000 users.

We ran workshops for 400 trainee teachers across Wales, with three of the teacher training providers. We also support the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative's annual competition.

Our work with the Age Friendly Culture Network, and partners such as Arts Council Wales and Ageing Well in Wales, supported the development of age and dementia-friendly work across our museums. Examples include our partnership with Blaenavon Town Council, which resulted in intergenerational work and dementia-friendly underground tours at Big Pit National Coal Museum.

We are a lead partner in Cultural Ambition, an initiative co-ordinated by Creative & Cultural Skills in partnership with Cardiff and Vale College and other Welsh heritage providers. The initiative is part of the Fusion programme and provides paid training placements and NVQ accreditation for 33 young people not in education, employment or training. Other opportunities include work placements and accredited courses in craft development and Welsh language learning.

Income Generation and Fundraising

Our annual contribution to the Welsh economy in 2018/19 was £83 million of gross value added, and our overall income generation, excluding Welsh Government grants, was £8.1 million for the year.

Our trading company had a turnover of £4.0 million and a record net profit of £0.9 million. Fundraising across the organization raised £1.0 million, for the redevelopment of St Fagans National Museum of History and key public programming, including increased investment from players of People's Postcode Lottery for our core work. We received gifts of artworks valued at £0.6m. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has also supported us with a range of different projects.

Research

In partnership with the Welsh Government, we have, for the last five years, led research and evaluation for the innovative programme Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture, which changes the impacts of poverty through cultural participation in communities across Wales.

We had notable successes in attracting research funding. In particular, we are partners in a £4.85m project, funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. The purpose of the project is to identify ways to control *Xylella*, described by the European Commission as 'one of the most dangerous plant bacteria worldwide.'

In partnership with Refugee Wales, we secured funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a three-year project working with refugees who have fled Syrian and Tamil civil-war conflicts and settled in Wales.

Research continues to refine our understanding of the source of the Stonehenge bluestones. Two locations in Mynydd Preseli in west Wales were identified as areas used for stone erected at Stonehenge. Modern geochemical analysis has led to archaeological excavations in the area, which have revealed evidence for stone quarrying in the Neolithic period, over 5,000 years ago.

Supporting Skills and Volunteering

In April 2018 Amgueddfa Cymru received the Investors in Volunteering Award. During the year, 1,135 people volunteered for us, contributing over 28,500 hours.

We saw a 35% increase in the number of volunteers compared to the previous year, and a 50% increase in the number of people applying. 37% of those recruited were under 25 years old – we consistently recruit a higher proportion of under 25s than any other age group.

As part of our work on the Historic Wales Strategic Partnership we have co-produced a Skills Report, to be launched in March 2020. We continue to invest in the development of our staff. In partnership with staff and trade unions, we developed key policies around workplace well-being, including a menopause policy to inform all staff and support women experiencing the menopause.

Developing the National Collections

How people can engage with items on display is evolving. We worked with Jam Creative Studios to develop Museum ExplorAR, an immersive augmented reality experience, at National Museum Cardiff. 93.5% of users rated the experience with 4-5 stars, and over 80% thought the experience offered good value for money.

We are home to Wales' collection of contemporary and historic art. Recent acquisitions include *Welsh Emergency Blankets* by Daniel Trivedy which won the National Eisteddfod's Gold Medal.

We believe that Black history in Wales needs better representation in the national collections. Objects, images and oral histories are now being collected in partnership with Black communities across Wales. We also worked with people from Black communities to re-interpret objects already in the collections and in April, we appointed our first Black History Curator. We are currently working with Race Council Cymru to support the Windrush generation of Wales project.

Our curators helped to identify and date a group of Iron Age chariot fittings, discovered in Pembrokeshire in 2018. It is the first chariot burial to be found not just in Wales, but in southern Britain. Young people from Pembrokeshire College have been documenting the whole process and our volunteers helped with the dig. We worked in partnership with Cadw, Dyfed Archaeological Trust and Pembrokeshire College, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to excavate the finds.

The Welsh Language

We encourage and support the use and celebration of the Welsh language. Ar Lafar, our festival for Welsh learners, organized in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh was held in April 2018, at St Fagans National Museum of History; the National Waterfront Museum; the National Slate Museum and the National Library of Wales. Sessions were developed in partnership with Menter Iaith and Mudiad Meithrin and 670 learners attended.

We have developed Welsh-language sessions for people living with dementia, developed in partnership with Ageing Well in Wales and piloted in Tŷ Gofal care home in Cardiff.

We commissioned theatre company Mewn Cymeriad to produce a drama based on the Welsh woollen industry at the National Wool Museum. We also contributed bilingual educational resources to Hwb, the digital educational resource platform that has 300,000 users and is used in 85% of schools in Wales. Our work with virtual and augmented reality are providing excellent virtual experiences through the medium of Welsh.